# ORAL EXAMS USEFUL SUGGESTIONS

Four stages: Warm-up, Level check, Probe, Wind-wh. (list of material)
Remain aware of interview phase: level & purpose of question.

(Function, Content & accuracy)

Keep a relaxed atmosphere - avoid sensitive topics.

Candidate must do most of the talking. Watch for recycled vocab.

Use "minimal" encouragers. Indicate attentiveness and interest.

No "baby talk". Try to maintain a natural "focused" conversation.

Questions may be rephraseable: from elaborate to simple.

Avoid gestures which reveal meaning.

Avoid questions answerable "yes/no", unless purposeful leading quest.

Are you getting a rateable sample? Great variety with minimum content.

Recognize the merit of circumlocutions. (Unless a discrete point test)

Elicit forms other than the first person singular.

Pace and method may vary markedly from classroom. (Pauses are rateable).

Have them ask you questions also (designate tense).

Possible grading criteria: -use of material on your list

-comprehension, accent, grammar, vocab., fluence

-function, content, accuracy

-overall impression (language production and

communication)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Immediate feed-back (evaluation sheet) -to take notes or not? Have some props or situations ready.

Possibility of "dramatic" role playing.

Prepare your students for the oral exam "interview" (illustrate?)

Record some interviews: -self evaluation, accurate evaluation, student feed-back, "communication?"

Consider native speech patterns and cultural differences.

# THEORY AND REALITY

It is best not to test your own students.

Length, conditions and scheduling of interview.

Objectivity of your exams at first vs. value.

Logistics.

# ORAL PROFICIENCY TESTING Method, Advice, Question Types

Retain normal speaking pace and tone unless absolutely impossible. Avoid "caretaker" speech.

Don't take time for corrections and teaching.

Talk as little as possible.

Be patient -- wait through pauses: they are both painful and productive.

Be sure to obtain a ratable sample.

### FOUR STAGES

Level Check Probes Wind-down Warm-up

SOME QUESTION TYPES (from ETS Manual)

		TYPE	EXAMPLE	OPTIMAL LEVEL(S)	
	1.	Yes/No Do	you live in?	0 - 0+ (Novice)	
	2.	Choice How	did you get here, by car or bus?	0+ - 1 (Novice-Intermediate)	,
	3.	Polite Wou request	ald you describe this room, please?	All	
			Who was with you? Why ? maps, assumed roles, etc.)	O+ - 3 (Novice - Superior) O+ - 1 (Novice/high - Int.)	
	5.	Familiar situation	Please order a hotel room with a debed and bath at the cheapest rat	and the second s	
	6.	Candidate interviews	Please ask me some questions, such where I live, etc.	as 0+ - 1 (Novice/high - Int.)	)
	(6A	tester Ask & Tell	I have to leave for a minute. Wou you please ask (partner) about X then tell me when I get back?		
	7.	Rephrasable question	Tell me about bicameral legislatur Then: Tell me about legislatures with two houses.	res? not below 1+ (Int./high)	
	8.	Hypothetical	If you	3 - 4+ (Superior)	
	9.	Unfamiliar	Directing tailor to make suit.	3 - 4+ (Superior)	
	10.	Descriptive prelude	Set up complex idea and ask subjection analysis of own thoughts.	ect's 3 - 5 (Superior)	

3 - 5

11. Conversational prelude -- two testers set the stage by discussing  $\boldsymbol{X}$ 

and then seek subject's opinion

Suggested Topics For An Oral Test

Introductions and Greetings

Sample Opening Questions: Have you been waiting long? How did you get to FSI? Have you been in this building before? Did you have difficulty finding this office?

# Topics useful for all levels:

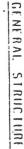
Training and experience with the language Most recent assignment abroad

Type of work and responsibilities Problems on the job Problems of the country, its government, economy, etc. Living conditions, travel, recreation Earlier assignments (as above) Next assignment People and events in the news (descriptions, not opinions)

Topics for. S-0+ to S-2+ (Novice - Adulyh) Family and House Date and Time Weather Giving Directions Situations: Getting a hotel room Buying a train ticket Reasons for career Changing money Taking a taxi

Topics for S-2 to S-4 Advanced to Superior (mid-range) Explanation of American terms and culture (e.g. "red tape," "Buy American" act, U.S. system of education) choice Visa interview or other job situations

Topics for S-3+ to S-5Superior Emid-range) to Nathre International politics Cultural differences Dictation of letter on assigned topic Translation from Fnglish





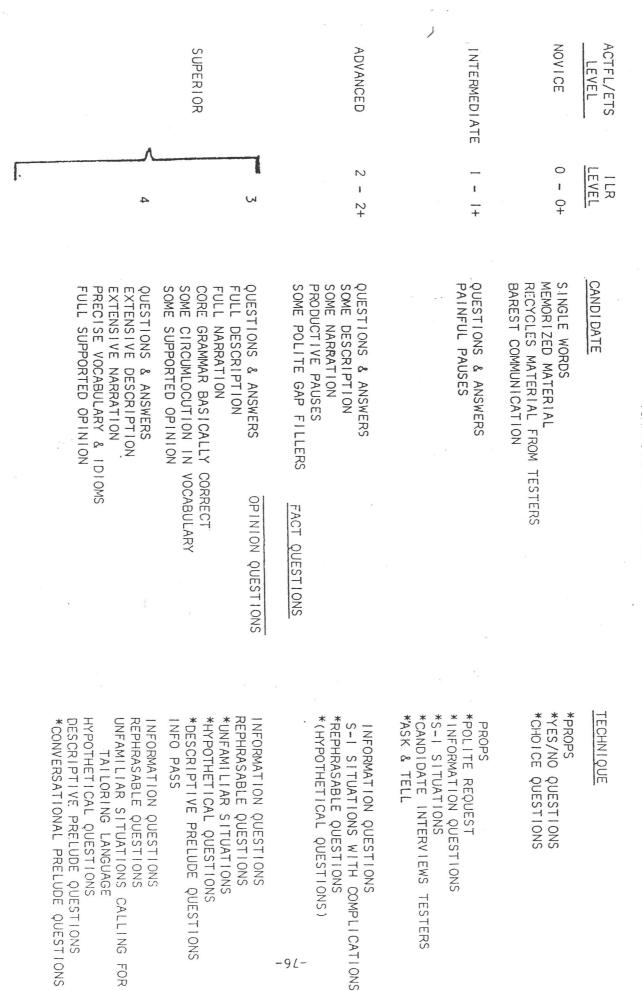
### TESTING KIT

# QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINERS

- 1. Are the first questions natural, friendly, easy to understand?
- 2. Are questions requiring only short answers avoided?
- 3. Are the topics varied? Is transition from one topic to another natural? Is the examinee given a chance to expand on one topic before another is introduced?
- 4. Are there too many vague questions? (e.g. "What do you think of the situation in the Congo?")
- 5. Is the examinee forced to express his opinion about U.S. Government Policy? (e.g. "If you were President, what would you do about Human Rights?") "How did you like the State-of-the-Union Message?")
- 6. Are the questions appropriate for the ability of the examinee?

  Is the S-2 asked easy enough questions? Is the S-4 asked hard enough questions? (Consider vocabulary, structure, subject matter.)
- 7. Is the examinee given the opportunity to talk sufficiently about the past? the future?
- 8. Is he given the opportunity (or forced, if necessary) to use the present subjunctive (including commands)? the past subjunctive? On the other hand, are there too many subjunctive questions?

# QUESTION TYPES IN RELATION TO CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE (CAPSULE CHARACTERIZATION)



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